



AMERICAN EMBASSY QUITO - ECUADOR

First Quarter 2008

American Citizen Newsletter

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Welcome from Ambassador Linda Jewell

Dear Resident Americans,

Welcome to the first-ever U.S. Embassy, Ecuador American Citizen E-Newsletter! The American Citizen Services sections of the Embassy in Quito and the Consulate in Guayaquil are initiating this quarterly e-newsletter to keep you informed of the latest information on issues that affect Americans residing in Ecuador. We'll include information on U.S. passports and services for American citizens, and link you electronically to other topics of interest. This newsletter is intended to supplement the messages on security issues and emergencies registered Americans will continue to receive as they arise. We hope you enjoy it and welcome your comments.

Best regards,

Linda Jewell
Ambassador

Security and Safety: Registering with the Embassy

Registering with the U.S. Embassy in Ecuador is critical in allowing us to serve you. We use the registration system to distribute warden messages, account for U.S. citizens in the case of an emergency, and keep an on-going count of U.S.

citizens in Ecuador.

The internet travel registration service for American citizens allows you to register and update your contact information on the internet at any time. It is important that all U.S. citizens have up-to-date contact information at all times. Additionally, we encourage all Americans to submit a valid, working email address so that we are able to directly send you our warden messages and other pertinent information.

Please pass on this message far and wide, to all U.S. citizens in Ecuador, whether here for a vacation or resident.

To register and/or update your contact information, please visit:

<https://travelregistration.state.gov>

All registered Americans who provide us email contact information will receive this newsletter automatically. Feel free to forward the newsletter to recently arrived American citizens living in Ecuador and encourage them to register as well.

If you are a member or a representative of a community group that includes Americans and would like to receive this newsletter for your group, please contact us at ConsularQuito@state.gov to sign up for our electronic mailing list.

A Call for Wardens

What is a Warden? A warden is a private American citizen residing in Ecuador who volunteers to assist the consular section in disaster preparedness and alerting Americans to emergency situations.

What does a Warden System Do? Warden systems provide a reliable way to reach American citizens in the event of an emergency as well as facilitate distribution of routine administrative information. Wardens provide updates on ongoing events in their district and assist in the registration of newcomers. In emergencies, wardens are sometimes asked to help locate missing Americans, or visit an American citizen in a jail or hospital.

Where you come in The American Citizen Services sections in Quito and Guayaquil are currently revamping their warden systems. We want to build not only a warden system that connects all U.S. citizens to an efficient source of information, but also an American community within Ecuador where one can turn in times of need. To do this, we need you. If you are interested in becoming a U.S. warden, please send an email to Bo Palmer (palmerrc@state.gov). We are looking for wardens from all regions, occupations and walks of life, so please don't hesitate to contact us if you are interested.

Consuls Coming to a Town Near You

The American Citizens Services section in Quito is planning to visit numerous cities and towns within its Consular District in order to meet with American Citizens and provide services. From passports to Social Security to voting, our traveling American Citizen Services team will be there to assist American Citizens residing in Ecuador. We are currently organizing our 2008 schedule, but would like your help and assistance. If you are an American Citizen residing outside of Quito and believe that an American Citizens Services visit would be beneficial to the American Citizen community in your town, please email Bo Palmer (palmercc@state.gov) in order to discuss possible time, locations, etc.

Mark your calendars. We are currently planning a trip to Macas on February 12th and 13th, 2008. We will provide more information about the time and place as the date approaches. In the meantime, if you are an American Citizen residing in Macas, please contact Bo Palmer (palmercc@state.gov) so that we can prepare to be serve you.

Crime Overview

Crime is a serious problem in Ecuador, and all American citizen residents and visitors should be alert and cautious. Non-violent crime is common throughout the country; hundreds of Americans are robbed every year in Ecuador. As you've read in two recent Warden Messages from Embassy Quito and Consulate Guayaquil, we've received reports of victims of sexual assault in recent months both hiking on Pichincha volcano in Quito and in connection with using taxis in Guayaquil ([Quito Warden Message](#), [Guayaquil Warden Message](#)).

It is important that all American citizens exercise caution and proper judgment in Ecuador. For safety recommendations, including tips for avoiding pickpockets, incidents while driving or using public transportation, etc., [click here](#).

For information on everything from entry requirements to medical facilities to disaster preparedness, please see the [Ecuador Consular Information Sheet](#).

Income Tax Time

Tax time is once again upon us. U.S. citizens who are resident overseas receive an automatic extension of the deadline to file, to June 15th. If you are a U.S. citizen or resident alien, the rules for filing tax returns are generally the same whether you are in the United States or abroad. Your individual circumstances

generally determine whether you must file an income tax return. The following link will assist you in determining your filing requirements: [Am I required to file a U. S. tax return?](#) You can find all of the forms, publications and information about income taxes at the IRS website by clicking here: [Internal Revenue Service](#).

A representative from the IRS will be visiting the U.S. Embassy in Quito on March 5th, 6th and 10th to assist U.S. citizens with their tax forms. Please call the American Citizen Services section in Quito (02 256-2890, ext. 4561) to schedule an appointment.

Voting Overseas

The U.S. Presidential Elections are less than a year away. U.S. Citizens overseas are guaranteed the right to vote in federal elections in the United States. Please note that you cannot simply log on to a website and vote at the last minute. Almost all states require voters to physically send in registration documents, receive paper ballots by return post, and mail in their completed ballots. Adequate preparation is key. Please see a [special voting message](#) issued by the U.S. Consulate in Guayaquil with pertinent information for voter registration.

You cannot register to vote or vote at the Embassy. However, we do supply the form necessary to request an absentee ballot from your last state of residence. [This site](#) will guide you on how to download, fill in, and send the form to the appropriate address in your state. For quick answers, consult the [Voting FAQ](#).

Hours and Contact Information

The U.S. Embassy in Quito and Consulate in Guayaquil provide a full range of consular and passport services for American citizens. Please [click here](#) to access Quito's website for information on opening hours, contact information and general information on each our services. Please [click here](#) for Consulate Guayaquil's general information.

The U.S. Embassy in Quito and Consulate in Guayaquil is closed on Ecuadorian and American holidays. In the coming months, we will observe the following holidays:

[January](#)

21st: Martin Luther King Day

[March](#)

20th: Holy Thursday

21st: Good Friday

[February](#)

4th-5th: Carnival

18th: Washington's Birthday

Please Note: Quito's consular section will be closed on Friday, January 18, 2008, for internal training.

Contact information and opening hours

Quito: <http://ecuador.usembassy.gov/overview-and-contact-info.html>

Guayaquil: http://guayaquil.usconsulate.gov/business_hours.html

Quito American Citizen Services

Notarials:

Monday - Thursday

1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

All Other Services:

Monday – Thursday

8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. & 1:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Social Security:

Tuesday – Thursday

1:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Telephone Inquiries: 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Tel: (593) 256-2890 EXT. 4523 (Only Social Security)

Telephones:

Tel: (593) 256-2890

Fax: (593) 256-1524

For calls concerning the arrest, injury, serious illness, or death of an American citizen after regular business hours (5:00 p.m. - 8:00 a.m.), please call: (593) 223-4126 or (593) 256-1749

E-mail:

General e-mail: Consularquito@state.gov

Guayaquil American Citizen Services

American Citizen Services are available without prior appointment (except for reports of birth) Monday through Thursday, from 8:00 to noon.

- Via Email: acsguayaquil@state.gov
Please do not send your visa inquiries to this e-mail address.
- Via Telephone: Monday through Thursday from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at (04) 2323-570 ext. 227 or 228
Please do not use these extensions for visa inquiries.
- In person: Monday through Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to noon at the U.S. Consulate in Guayaquil, 2nd Floor.

For American Citizen Emergencies call (04) 2321-152
(24 hours) American Citizen Services.

For business other than American Citizens Services, Immigrant Visas, or Non-Immigrant Visas, call (04) 232-3570 Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.